



***Official Statement by His Excellency Jorge Gomes, Secretary of State of Internal Administration of Portugal, at the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Cancun, Mexico, May, 25, 2017.***

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First of all, let me take this opportunity to thank the Mexico Government for hosting the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as to Cancun city, for the excellent hospitality.

**Excellency's**

**Distinguish Delegates**

**Mr. Chairman**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Portugal recognizes the effort and input given by the United Nation on the promotion of Disaster Risk Reduction principles, through the adoption of 2015 Sendai framework, in line with the sustainable development goals, Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the New Urban Agenda.

Portuguese Government considers disaster **risk reduction a national priority**, based on an integrated approach, supported by the dialogue between authorities at different levels, aiming to increase prevention and response to disasters by 2020.

In this context, **Portuguese Government will adopt a National Strategy for Preventive Civil Protection**, a reference document on Disaster Risk Reduction, that demonstrates a significant alignment and a strong national commitment with the priorities established by the Sendai Framework, especially the ones related to disaster **risk governance**



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and **local authorities empowerment**, as essential pillars of the change of paradigm we intend to promote.

Specifically, we recognize that the **local scale**, as the nearest level to citizen, plays a fundamental role in mobilizing communities and strengthening the commitment with resilience. Portugal is promoting the decentralization of competences to municipalities, which is absolutely necessary, and has been carrying out concrete actions to **empower local leaders** through the sharing of knowledge, best practices and appropriate guidelines so that all the necessary tools for the implementation of measures in this area are available.

The commitment of local authorities to disaster risk prevention has increased significantly and this is now a key issue on their agenda. To prove it is the success of the "Making Resilient Cities" campaign, where the number of Portuguese municipalities that signed up has tripled in the last two years. Through the cities, their leaders and their communities, with the implementation of innovative measures, we are receiving, every day, key contributions for the construction of safer and more sustainable communities.

Portuguese Government wants to promote the involvement of citizens and their voluntary organizations, because prevention begins within citizens, as first civil protection agents, and therefore, we have approved a **new regulation of civil protection volunteers' organizations**.

Another of the axes to be developed under this Strategy is the **reinforcement of the implementation of forecasting and early warning systems**, aimed at sudden occurrences and rapid development, in order to improve preparedness in the event of disasters.

This approach is also associated with the new regulation that will promote a preventive culture of land use, in order to avoid increasing exposure to risk factors and establish mechanisms to encourage risk reduction in areas of high susceptibility. **Land-use planning**, at its various



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scales, is of strategic importance in this field, and is one of the most important tools for sustainability that we all aim to achieve.

At the same time, we will continue the work that has been developed to continue promoting **risk education for children and youth** at all levels of education through projects specifically addressed to the school community, which we consider a preferential vehicle for mentalities changing.

We will also continue to put an enormous effort for increased **resilience in the private sector**, already heavily involved in the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, and which has been an indispensable partner for increasing the **resilience of national critical infrastructures**.

All these actions will be complemented by the **sharing of experiences and knowledge and the promotion of new partnerships**, both internally and internationally, contributing to an effective implementation of the policies foreseen in the Sendai Framework

**Dear Chairman,**

- I would like to affirm Portugal's commitment and determination to implement the Sendai Framework in an active way, through the implementation of our National Strategy for Preventive Civil Protection.

We believe in the role to be played by this Global Platform, and we are fully committed to the established lines of action and their contribution to a culture of global security and resilience in the face of the enormous social, economic and environmental challenges that human kind faces today, to which it is urgent to respond on behalf of this and future generations.



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Thank you very much.